



# Canberra Bushwalking Club



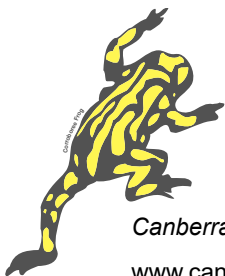
This is



*it... 's our 60th Anniversary*  
*Celebrating the CBC's sexagenery*



60th Anniversary



Canberra Bushwalking Club Inc PO Box 160 Canberra ACT 2601

[www.canberrabushwalkingclub.org](http://www.canberrabushwalkingclub.org)

Published by the Canberra Bushwalking Club 2021

[www.canberrabushwalkingclub.org](http://www.canberrabushwalkingclub.org)

Proudly supported by National Mailing and Marketing

 **National  
Mailing &  
Marketing**

# Contents

President's 60th Anniversary Prattle	1
60th Anniversary editorial	2
Origins of the Canberra Bushwalking Club	3
<i>Greg Buckman</i>	3
<b>Part 1: Club origins</b>	<b>3</b>
Geoff Mosley, Club co-founder	4
Gösta Lyngå, Club co-founder	5
<b>Part 2: The early years</b>	<b>6</b>
CBC: The early years	6
<i>Greg Buckman</i>	6
Sixty years young?	7
Doug Wright, early Club member and President	8
Yvonne and Karl Erett, early Club members	9
A memorable Club walk	9
<i>Janet Duncan (joined 1998)</i>	9
Memories of Club walks	10
<i>Henry Burmester (joined 1973)</i>	10
A memorable Club walk	10
<i>Meg McKone (joined 1973)</i>	10
Memories of Club walks	11
<i>Tim Wright (joined 1974)</i>	11
The 60 years of rises and stalls in CBC's membership	11
<i>Andrea Coombas, Keith Thomas, Greg Buckman</i>	11
<b>Part 3: Growth and change</b>	<b>11</b>
CBC's face: The Club logo	12
CBC's voice: The CBC newsletter	12
A memorable Club walk	13
<i>Linda Groom (joined 1976)</i>	13
Memories of long, rough and 'Tiger' club walks	14
<i>David Drohan (joined 1985 – an old Tiger walker with very faded stripes)</i>	14
Memories of Club walks	14
<i>Cynthia Breheny (joined 1969)</i>	14
A memorable Club walk	14
<i>Roger Edwards (joined 1986)</i>	14
Observations from a CBC committee devotee	15
<i>Lorraine Tomlins (joined 1978)</i>	15

# Contents, *cont'd*

<b>Part 4: Reflections from the past..</b>	<b>15</b>
Impressions from a former Walks Secretary	16
<i>Rob Horsfield (joined 1991)</i>	<i>16</i>
Memories of Club walks	16
<i>Paul Sheils (joined 1983)</i>	<i>16</i>
Forty-seven years in CBC	17
<i>Meg McKone (joined 1973)</i>	<i>17</i>
Reflections from a long-term Membership Secretary	18
<i>Roger Edwards (joined 1986)</i>	<i>18</i>
A memorable Club walk	18
<i>Cynthia Breheny (joined 1969)</i>	<i>18</i>
A memorable Club walk	19
<i>Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine (joined 1968)</i>	<i>19</i>
A memorable Club walk	19
<i>Di Thompson (joined 1968)</i>	<i>19</i>
A memorable Club walk	19
<i>Ian Hickson (joined 1982)</i>	<i>19</i>



## President's 60th Anniversary Prattle

Welcome to the 60th Anniversary edition of *it...*



Our Club has a long and proud history with a trail of stand-out members who, as the decades unfold, have together woven a rich and colourful tapestry that has become our story. Some of these early members have lived through and experienced a lot of change in the world of bushwalking since those early days in the '60s. Upon reminiscing and reflecting, it seems there is at least one characteristic in particular that has remained steadfast and true, and that is our members' thirst for adventure, which most certainly endures.

Today, six decades on, our leaders continue to plan and lead an enormous variety of activities, including exploratory walks, in ranges of challenging terrain. Many of our most favourite areas as a Club over the years have been decimated either by fires or ravaged

by droughts and floods. These events have changed some areas so much that at times bushwalking in them has become almost impenetrable.

Other phenomenal changes have occurred, such as developments in the technology space. We have so many options for navigation nowadays, from readily accessible hard copy maps (now largely replaced by digital versions of the 1:25,000) to handheld GPS devices and smartphones. We have Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) and various tracking devices so we can stream our whereabouts or be more quickly rescued in the case of an emergency. We have ultralight tents and camping gear that make multi-day hikes a relatively lightweight pursuit. We've replaced Stubbies and Volleys for tech clothing that wicks away moisture, dries quickly, and resists odours. Who would've thought? I for one am particularly grateful for this latter-day advancement!

So, it is with enormous gratitude that I thank Greg Buckman and Meghan Bergamin for all the hard work involved in taking us on this historic journey, and to the contributing members who have so graciously taken the time to share their stories.

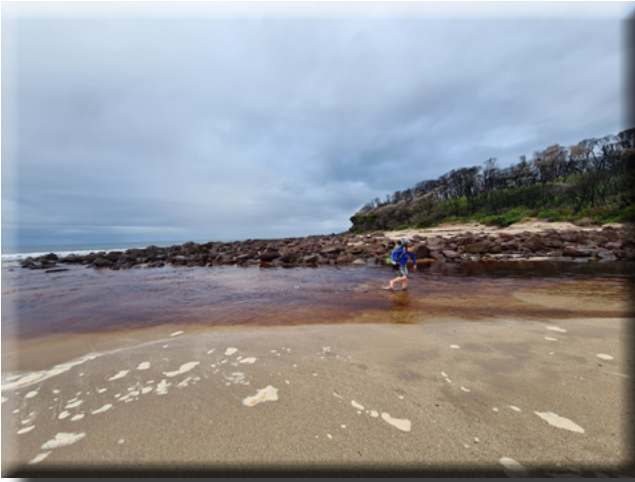
It is now past time for you the reader to make yourself a good brew if you haven't already and take some time to reminisce and relive a journey back through the decades and through the eyes of your fellow members.

I do hope you enjoy this anniversary edition as much as I did.

**Diana Terry**  
**President, Canberra Bushwalking Club**

## 60th Anniversary editorial

*it...*'s the 60th Anniversary editorial



On behalf of myself and my guest co-editor, Greg Buckman, welcome to the 60th Anniversary special edition of the Canberra Bushwalking Club newsletter; *it...*

Much like a good L/R/X walk, the past 60 years of the Canberra Bushwalking Club have included challenges, rough patches and a few low points, but the overwhelming emotions coming out of it all are joy, pride, exhilaration, and a good deal of camaraderie. And so, just as a long walk is best followed by a long talk about what we've achieved and where we've been, it's fitting that we mark the Club's anniversary by reminiscing over our journey so far.

And that's exactly what we're doing in this edition. We'll look back at the Club's origins and our journey so far, and reflect on the collective achievements of our community. I hope that by the end of it you will find yourself, like I have, feeling inspired and ready to join in CBC's adventures over decades to come.

Greg Buckman would like to thank Geoff Mosley, Gösta Lyngå, Doug Wright, Yvonne and Karl Erett, Meghan Bergamin (cheers, Greg!), Andrea Coombas, Keith Thomas, Phil and Jan Gatenby, Lauren Ogden, Andrew Meers, Terrylea Reynolds, Diana Terry, Meredith Hatherly and Alison Milton, as well as all those who kindly made contributions to this newsletter: Janet Duncan, Henry Burmester, Meg McKone, Tim Wright, Linda Groom, David Drohan, Cynthia Breheny, Roger Edwards, Rob Horsfield, Lorraine Tomlins, Paul Sheils, Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine, Di Thompson and Ian Hickson.

However, the real thanks must go to Greg himself. He's devoted the equivalent of 'three or four overnight walks' worth of time to writing and curating the content for this special 60th anniversary edition, and as you read through his work, I'm sure you'll agree that it was time well spent. So, thank you, Greg – I hope we'll all be joining you out on the trails someday soon.

Editorially yours...

**Meghan Bergamin**  
**Editor, Canberra Bushwalking Club**





# Part 1: Club origins

## Origins of the Canberra Bushwalking Club

*Greg Buckman*



As we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Canberra Bushwalking Club (CBC), the obvious question is, how did it all start?

CBC largely owes its inception to early 1960s PhD student, Geoff Mosley, his passion for bushwalking, and the friendships he developed at ANU's University House. Geoff came to Canberra in early 1960 after doing a lot of bushwalking in New Zealand, with the Wellington based Tararua Bushwalking Club, and in Tasmania, with the Hobart Walking Club. He wanted to do walks in the ACT and though he organised some private outings early on, he missed the broader opportunities that walking clubs provided.

Geoff sounded-out the Canberra Alpine Club, which mainly focused on skiing, and the Canberra Walking and Touring Club (CWTC), which formed in 1947 but had been inactive since the early 1950s. In short, he found there were no bushwalking clubs in Canberra, so he set about reviving the CWTC.

Geoff consulted bushwalking friend, Gösta Lyngå, who, like him, lived at University House, as well as others, including David Gibson, Ted Wishart and Ken Kerrison. All were enthusiastic about setting up a club, so the first meeting was held in Gösta's University House flat on 15 November 1961, attended by 19 people, at which an interim committee was formed.



The newly-minted committee was made up of Jack Leslie (former CWTC office bearer and interim chairman of the revived club), Margot Cox (interim Secretary), Noel Semple and Geoff Mosley. Other people at that first meeting included: David Gibson, Pauline Hiscox (later Lyngå), Fay Moore (later Kerrison) and John Wanless.

A fortnight later, a larger meeting was held at Margot Cox's house, its notice declared: 'Canberra has grown from a small town into a sizable city...it is now large enough to support a separate, independent walking club'. Club membership was set at five shillings per year (decimal currency started in 1966...).

In January 1962, the first of the Club's regular monthly meetings was held and a new committee was appointed, comprising Jack Leslie as Acting President, Geoff Mosley as Secretary, Ken Kerrison as Acting Treasurer and Ted Wishart as committee member. The Club's constitution was ratified at its first annual general meeting in February 1962.

The Club was on its feet. It continued to use the CWTC name for its first four years, but Geoff Mosley says there was a 'general sense that it was a new beginning' and in February 1965, it changed its name to the Canberra Bushwalking Club.

The fledgling club wasted no time tackling some ambitious walks. Its first one, sometimes referred to as its 'precursor walk', was led by Gösta Lyngå to Bungonia Gorge, in Bungonia National Park in November 1961, (which the Club still visits). Then came its first programmed walk, to the Upper Cotter—Bimberi area in February 1962, led by Bert Bennett and Jack Leslie.



Following that, in March 1962, the Club took on an ambitious traverse of the Budawangs in Morton National Park, with separate parties starting from the eastern and western sides. The two groups planned to camp together on Mt Owen (and swap car keys): problem was, the western group couldn't make it to the designated spot in time, but tried in vain to make contact by shouting out once they stopped in the nearby Monolith Valley. Frazzled and worried, they set off early the next day only to come across the eastern bound group a few hours later having a leisurely breakfast without a worry in the world. All character forming stuff!

What the Club may have lacked in finesse, it made up for in ambition and energy and never looked back. We can't thank Geoff Mosley enough.

## Geoff Mosley, Club co-founder

The Canberra Bushwalking Club didn't emerge spontaneously: it was the brainchild of bushwalker, environmentalist and UK expat, Geoff Mosley. He came to Canberra in 1960, aged 29, having already done a lot of walking in Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Tasmania.

Geoff became the Club's first President at its inaugural annual general meeting in February 1962. It was after Geoff took the helm that the spontaneous Club creativity began. Geoff says once the Club was up and running 'it had no problem attracting members.'

But how did Geoff come to be in Canberra?

Geoff was brought up near the Peak District in northern England, and, from an early age, was imbued with the tonic of bushwalking. While at Nottingham University doing a masters degree on the Peak District National Park (England's first), he organised many ambitious walks, before doing national service in the Royal Airforce.

Geoff then travelled to Canada and New Zealand, taking in the sublime walking opportunities each offered. By then, Geoff was keen to do further study, and began a PhD on outdoor recreation in Tasmania at the ANU, which required extensive travel around the Apple Isle, including a trek to the then pristine Lake Pedder, (which was flooded in 1972).

Once Canberra Bushwalking Club was up and running, Geoff immersed himself in its pursuits, especially its orienteering competitions and walks to areas like Bungonia National Park, the Bimberi Wilderness in Namadgi National Park, the Blue Mountains, Kosciuszko National Park and the Budawang in Morton National Park. He briefly returned to the UK in 1963 before coming back to Canberra the following year to work in the Immigration Department.



With an ever-restless mind, Geoff was keen to pursue further academic work and, in 1964, took up a postdoctoral position at the then-infant University of Newcastle. In 1966, he moved back to Canberra where he began a half-century association with the nation's peak environment organisation, the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), and was appointed its Assistant Director in 1968.

When the ACF relocated its headquarters to Melbourne in 1969, Geoff made his final move away from Canberra. He went on to become ACF's Director in 1973 — a position he held until 1986, including over the course of the tumultuous but ultimately successful campaign to save Tasmania's Franklin River, in which the ACF played a crucial role. After stepping down from that position, Geoff became an environmental consultant and remained on ACF's council until 2015.



Some of Geoff's most memorable CBC walks were to Mother Woila, a prominent peak in Deua National Park. He identified it as the one of the most significant peaks unclimbed by non-Indigenous people in eastern Australia and led a charge, in 1964, for the Canberra Bushwalking Club to put the first European—Australian people on its summit, as well as to complete its first circumnavigation. Like many nearby areas at the time, no detailed maps existed, just basic parish ones.

The success of these trips owed much to Geoff's drive and daring as did the establishment of the Club.

Geoff was voted the first ever life member of CBC in 1965.







## Gösta Lyngå, Club co-founder

Like Geoff Mosley, Gösta Lyngå was a founding office bearer of the Canberra Bushwalking Club. Also like Geoff, much happenstance and serendipity led to his participation in it.

Gösta was born in Sweden where he earned an undergraduate degree in mathematics and physics, before undertaking a PhD in astronomy. He also did a lot of walking, orienteering, climbing and skiing. Over the years, Gösta became interested in open clusters of stars in the Milky Way. Fortunately for the Club, these are best observed in the Southern Hemisphere

So it was that the stars brought Gösta to the Swedish-operated Uppsala telescope at Mount Stromlo in 1961. The Mount Stromlo observatories were managed by the ANU, so he moved into University House and, luckily for us, met Geoff Mosley and fellow outdoors enthusiast, David Gibson.

When Geoff started pushing for the creation of a local bushwalking club, a meeting to discuss the idea was held in Gösta's University House flat on 15 November 1961, attended by about 19 people. Everyone liked the idea, so a second meeting was held a fortnight later and Gösta went on to lead the Club's first walk, to Bungonia Gorge, in late November 1961. Because the Club was still just a concept, Gösta refers to it as the Club's 'precursor' walk.

The outdoors also took Gösta to Perisher Valley where he met his future wife, Pauline Hiscox. Pauline came to be an active early Club member alongside her future husband. At the time, Gösta says, 'orienteering was virtually unknown in Australia' so he soon organised several Club orienteering competitions.



Pauline went with Gösta back to Sweden in 1963 via the 'road less travelled' – driving overland from India to Sweden via Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran. They even celebrated their wedding anniversary on the Khyber Pass. The couple returned to Australia, and re-engaged with CBC in 1968 before returning again to Sweden in the early 1970s where their flame of adventure remained undimmed.



Gösta became active in the Swedish Greens (Miljöpartiet de gröna) and was elected one of its first national parliamentarians in 1986. As a fresh MP, he set about establishing the country's first carbon tax. Australia kept calling though and, in 1991, Pauline and Gösta (with their children) came back for the final time. Once here, Gösta got reacquainted with the Club and also helped establish the Australian Greens in 1992.

Fate dealt Pauline and Gösta a cruel blow when their Duffy house was burnt to the ground in the 2003 Canberra bushfires, but they picked themselves up and rebuilt on their block two years later. Pauline passed away in 2011.

Aged 91, Gösta thinks of himself as youthful still and remains an active walker. Although he decided to move back to Sweden in 2021 and has no plans to return to Australia, Gösta says his best bushwalking memories are rooted in our very own Budawangs in Morton National Park, as well as in the Himalayas and Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa.



## Part 2: The early years

### CBC: The early years

*Greg Buckman*



After its inception in 1961, Canberra Bushwalking Club grew quickly. By 1965 it already had 172 members and, after 10 years, about 200 – just under half of what we have today.

With size and longevity came confidence: in 1965, the Club decided to stop being a reincarnation of the Canberra Walking and Touring Club and formally become the Canberra Bushwalking Club. It was a youthful bunch: Karl Erett remembers there being few members over 40 years of age. Doug Wright says a large proportion came from outside Canberra and, in many cases, overseas, bringing diverse perspectives to the Club.

And they were into everything.

Geoff Mosley remembers the Club put on a range of specialised outings including bird spotting, photography, igloo building, gold panning, li-loing, orienteering and rock climbing – most not covered by other clubs in Canberra at the time.

Members often promoted activities they to which they had had previous exposure – for example, Gösta Lyngå pushed orienteering, which he'd pursued in his native Sweden. The Club held several of its own orienteering competitions and took part in an inter-club competition run by Paddy Pallin, in which it won the mixed team category.

Karl Erett championed rock-climbing, an activity he'd been exposed to in West Germany, and as a result, there were many Club rock-climbing outings at places like Mt Coree and Booroomba Rocks. Some Mt Coree climbs are, to this day, named

after early Club members such as 'Karl's Twist,' named after Karl Erett, 'Johnny's Swing,' named after John Wanless, and 'Skorstensrumba', named by Gösta (Swedish for 'Chimney Zumba'). Gösta even wrote a rock-climbing guide for Mt Coree, which is available in the Club's archives.

The Club also, of course, put on a lot of bushwalks, but they weren't without their challenges. Today, most of us have ready access to GPS and navigation apps on our phones, but in the 1960s, much of Namadgi, Tidbinbilla, the Budawangs and Kosciuszko National Park were either completely unmapped or only roughly mapped. This meant Club members were often left walking into the great unknown.

On one Club walk, a Pygmy Possum was sighted at O'Keefes Hut before it was officially discovered at Mt Hotham in Victoria in 1966. On another walk, in 1962, members loaded their cars up with lots of dry food fearing a nuclear bomb would be dropped during the Cuban missile crisis.

A major factor behind the success of the Club's walks program was transport. Poor transport coordination had been part of the demise of the first incarnation of the CWTC in the 1950s. With lots of members being newly posted to the capital in the public service, many didn't have cars, but the Club arranged for participants to be picked up and dropped off to their homes, significantly boosting the accessibility of its walks.



All the energy and youthfulness did not mean that the new club was free of issues. Doug Wright remembers two vexed debates over waste disposal and mixed gender tents.





In the early 1960s, many walkers had a ‘burn-bash-and-bury’ approach to waste, which was eventually replaced by a ‘pack-in-pack-out’ approach; one which survives to this day. Some joined the Club to meet potential partners, but the issue of unmarried mixed tents caused unease for some (there was even half serious pressure to appoint a Club ‘morals officer’). This issue wasn’t confined to CBC: three decades before, the Sydney Bush Walkers issued an official edict prohibiting mixed tents. Happily, though, Doug says a ‘consenting adults’ approach came to be accepted in the Canberra club.

Beyond the immediate concerns of social etiquette in the Club, members were also starting to engage with broader environmental issues. Geoff Mosley remembers that, in the late 1960s, the Club lobbied the Department of the Interior for a large, new Namadgi National Park, which eventually came to fruition with the 1991 declaration of a 106,000 ha



reserve. About the same time, members of the Club also became involved in the early zoning of Kosciuszko National Park.

They were halcyon days fuelled by lots of young, idealistic energy.

## Sixty years young?



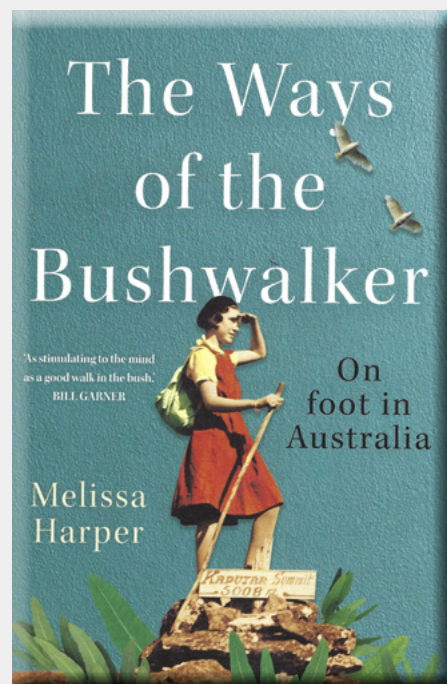
Although the Canberra Bushwalking Club is celebrating a full six decades of existence, it is, in fact, one of the younger bushwalking clubs in Australia.

Some clubs were established as early as the late nineteenth century, with the Sydney-based Warragamba Club having been established in 1895, and the Melbourne-based Wallaby Club first convened in 1894 (incidentally, both of these clubs excluded women). Of clubs that still exist today, the Melbourne Walking Club is the oldest. Originally founded as the Melbourne Amateur Walking and Touring Club in 1894: this club inspired the establishment of the CWTC in 1947, which went on to spawn the Canberra Bushwalking Club.

In the 1920s and 1930s, there was a wave of new bushwalking clubs founded around Australia,

including the Hobart Walking Club in 1929 and the Coast and Mountain Walkers in 1934. However, what the ACT may lack in bushwalking club longevity, it more than makes up for in bushwalking enthusiasm: according to a 2019 *Sport Australia* survey of sport participation, the ACT and Tasmania have the highest levels of bushwalking engagement.

More Australian bushwalking history can be found in Melissa Harper’s excellent (and recently republished) *The Ways of the Bushwalker: On foot in Australia*.



## Doug Wright, early Club member and President



Like many of the CBC pioneers, Doug Wright was an outsider who came to the capital, fell in love with its environment, and wanted to see more.

Born in London, Doug became interested in walking in the English countryside as a teenager, though his growing passion was disrupted by being conscripted into the British Army for two years (spending his second year in Saigon at the British Consulate General). Upon his return to London, Doug worked for Shell Petroleum during which his interest in climbing in England and Wales led to his becoming a founder member of the (still active) Rockhopper Climbing Club.

In 1956, Doug travelled overland for eight months through Asia and Australia to go climbing in New Zealand. He spent two years exploring that country while working mainly in Christchurch. Looking for another change, Doug decided to look for work in Australia and, in late 1959, joined the Department of Foreign Affairs.

In Canberra, before going to Vientiane to help to establish Australia's first Mission in Laos, Doug was lucky to meet up with Margot Cox, a member of the Canberra Walking and Touring Club, who took him on his first local bushwalk down the Scrivener Gorge (before the dam was built). On his return to Canberra in mid-1962, Doug re-joined the Club, married Maxine, and the two of them immersed themselves in the Club's activities, with Doug becoming its fifth President in 1965.

Doug oversaw the creation of the Club's *it* newsletter and joined in the weekly bush song evenings held in various Club members' houses. Club meetings became more structured, with 20–30 generally attending, with a large part devoted to verbal reports on recent walks or members' attempts to induce others to join their next walk.

There was an air of optimism that spread to the Club's exploration of nearby natural places. The optimism was crucial as few members knew much about the places they were venturing into and access and maps were often poor. Doug says many of the Clubs' early walks were 'exploration' more than anything. He fondly remembers early treks to the Budawangs and Ettrema Gorge, Mimosa Rocks National Park and Nadgee Nature Reserve (in south-east NSW) as well as Kosciuszko National Park. Membership grew through word of mouth and many met their future spouses through CBC. There were Club trips most weekends.

Doug went on to be posted to cities including Beirut, Phnom Penh and Rio de Janeiro but was always passionate about the Club and invested a lot of time and energy into it – recognised by his eventual designation as a Life Member.

Over the last 60 years, Doug has led many bushwalks, introduced Club members to skiing, gotten them to join him for Christmas Day lunch beside Lake Burley Griffin, made many friends, and shared with his three children, the pleasures of walking and camping in the bush.





## Yvonne and Karl Erett, early Club members



In its first few years, most members of the Canberra Bushwalking Club were young migrants to the region from other parts of Australia and the world. Among them were Yvonne and Karl Erett. Yvonne grew up in Queensland and was transferred to Canberra to work for the Treasury in 1957. At the time, there were only about 30,000 people in the city (less than a tenth of today's total).

Karl was born in a country that no longer exists: Yugoslavia. Because of his German ethnicity, he was relocated to Bavaria, in Germany, during World War Two and applied to emigrate to the United States after the war ended. After that fell through, he applied for Australia thinking he could eventually emigrate to the US from here.

An acquaintance of his agreed to find accommodation and work for him in Canberra so he ended up here instead of Sydney or Melbourne. Once in the capital, he was entranced by its natural surroundings and soon joined both the Canberra Bushwalking Club and the Canberra Alpine Club.

Yvonne and Karl met while water skiing with the Alpine Club and also immersed themselves in many CBC activities. These included a Club orienteering competition near Captains Flat, climbing Black Mountain, floating down the Shoalhaven River and walking in Warrumbungle National Park.

Most Club members were either public servants or university students, and Yvonne and Karl remember a very social, positive atmosphere pervading most of its activities. Like Club cofounder, Gösta Lyngå, Karl brought some of the outdoor activities he'd enjoyed in his homeland to the Club. He showed slides of the Bavarian mountains in Germany at one of its meetings and took part in many Club rock-climbing trips: one of the routes on Mount Coree is even named 'Karl's Twist' after him.

Family responsibilities came to displace Yvonne and Karl's Club pursuits, but, to this day, they hold fond memories of their early Canberra Bushwalking Club adventures.

### A memorable Club walk

*Janet Duncan (joined 1998)*

One of my most memorable Club walks was led by Vance Brown. We parked our cars in Bungonia National Park near a rough track that descended steeply to Bungonia Creek. We sometimes slid more than walked down to a large lake with a huge rock in the middle. Vance allowed time for a refreshing swim and we had morning tea by the pool. From here, we walked alongside the lake, turned left and entered a small gorge. The huge ledge of rocks at the opening of the gorge meant I needed help climbing up and we clambered along this rocky ledge for a few metres.

Abruptly, the rocks ended and a three metre wide river could be seen disappearing around a corner. Gingerly, we entered the water, gasping at its coldness, swam a few metres, then needed to turn a corner: the walkers behind us watched us disappear. To our astonishment, as we swam around the corner, we could see a waterfall about five metres away with about a ten metre drop!

Vance urged us to swim though the pelting cold water but another surprise awaited us. We were in a cave about four metres high with wet rocky mossy walls...and where the ceiling would normally have been was a huge boulder perched above us and we could see the sky around it.

I found this walk amazing and have led it a few times. Thanks, Vance, for showing us this 'bushwalking treasure'.



## Memories of Club walks

*Henry Burmester (joined 1973)*

Memorable Club trips for me usually involve challenging terrain, unknown territory and unexpected events.

Extended walks often provided this, going to places like Papua New Guinea, Hinchinbrook Island (in Queensland) or Tasmania. My introduction to many years of walking in Tasmania was a Club trip of three weeks over 1975–76, starting at the Walls of Jerusalem, in central Tasmania, across to the Overland Track and Lake St Clair, the Labyrinth, Mt Gould and Lake Marion, the Eldons and, in the last week, at Frenchman's Cap (in the western part of the state).

Occasional thick scrub, house-size rock boulders on the Eldons, lovely campsites by lakes and missing food parcels remain firmly in my memory. It was also a walk with a laissez-faire leadership that required increased self-reliance. The young tigers on the trip relished this added challenge. Leadership styles were a matter of some controversy in CBC at the time (as a reading of *it* from 1975–78 shows). Today's expectations of a leader are more



demanding and a much more controlling leadership is required.

### A memorable Club walk

*Meg McKone (joined 1973)*



The trip was advertised in *it* as 'Walk in a Wilderness Budawang: A Burmester Bushbash' in September 1979. Who could resist? Not the 15 of us who climbed Pickering Point onto the plateau of Byangee Walls with its tantalising view of the double cliffline on the eastern side of the Castle. By the time we'd descended the western end of Byangee Walls, it was still before lunch.

Some bright spark suggested climbing the lower cliffline instead of traversing round to the western

side for the traditional route up the Castle. Young, enthusiastic and carefree (some might have said careless), we set off up a series of rock ribs, chutes and chimneys with liberal use of our ropes for pack-hauling and belaying.

By 6 pm, dusk was approaching and the final route to the top was looking harder than expected, so most of us retreated to a broad rock ledge with a waterfall and creek. One brave couple roped themselves onto a narrower, lower ledge lest they roll off in the darkness.

It was a fine night and we woke refreshed to a magnificent sunrise, then set off to find the rest of the party who, having spent a dry night on a steep slope, were decidedly grumpy. A route through the cliffs still eluded us and no-one felt like retreating down near-vertical rock faces. We walked to and fro along various ledges gaining height between each one until, at last, we reached the tail of The Castle, relieved and exhilarated about our achievement.

Strangely enough, no one was keen to continue on to the very top. So, in worsening weather, we belted off round the western side of the Castle and down Kalianna Ridge. As Henry wrote in the November 1979 *it*: 'No one could remember a CBC trip quite like it.'





## Memories of Club walks

*Tim Wright (joined 1974)*



After joining the Club and going on just one or two walks, I became addicted and, to this day, consider myself an ‘utterly incorrigible, recidivist bushwalker.’

In those early days, you got on a Club bushwalk by filling in your details on a list in the Paddy Pallin

store and were subsequently contacted by the leader who arranged the transport details. Being young and single (and a little scheming), it occurred to me that, if I led walks, I could arrange transport for the young single women that came along to travel with me or friends of mine. With this in mind, I started leading walks and ‘arranging’ the transport, and soon enough ended up with a wife who still walks with me and the Club. For a time, CBC was the best dating agency in town!

There have been so many great walks with CBC and it would be hard to say which was the best. I have especially enjoyed the overnight trips to places like Bungonia National Park and the Budawangs. Once, we were camped and went for a twilight walk returning to find our packs had been rifled through by a possum that we saw sitting up in a tree devouring one of our oranges. Bushwalking can be amusing too.

# Part 3: Growth and change

## The 60 years of rises and stalls in CBC’s membership

*Andrea Coomblas, Keith Thomas, Greg Buckman*



Membership levels are the ultimate barometer of the popularity of the Canberra Bushwalking Club.

As shown in the accompanying graph, the Club enjoyed rapid membership increases in its first 11 years, climbing to 200 (just under half today’s level) by 1972, then 260 by 1976. After that, growth levelled off and was fairly static until 1990, when it reached 300 for the first time. Following that peak, memberships again remained fairly flat for about 25 years with annual membership levels generally between 290 and 360.

However, around 2015, something changed, and there began a steady increase through to February 2018 (and beyond) when the Club’s membership reached 400 for the first time. That ‘something’ may have been the new Club website and/or renewed interest in bushwalking and all things environmental. The Club’s membership had been increasing before the new webpage was introduced in November 2017, but it probably helped sustain the growth.

Ongoing increases in the Territory’s population may also have been a factor: since the late 1990s, the Club’s membership has been a roughly constant proportion of the ACT’s population. The first half of 2019 saw memberships slump a little to about



360, and then steadily increase again until we started 2020 with just over 400 members once more.

Overall, our membership increased by 27% between 2014 and March 2021 making it the Club's most sustained period of growth since the 1960s. Given the fires, smoke, track closures and pandemic of recent times, it is pleasing that membership levels managed to increase during 2020.

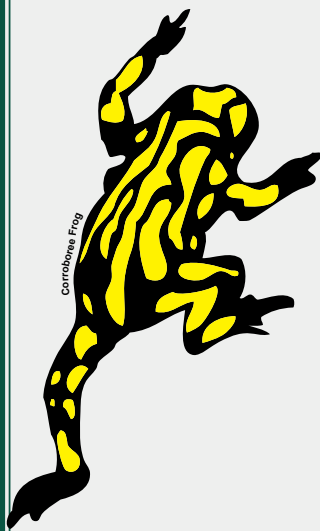
In 2021, our 60th anniversary year, memberships remained steady at around 410, although we hit an all-time peak in July 2021 with 437 members.

As the Club ages, inevitably, so too do its members. By early this year, the Club had 93 members who had originally joined 20 or more years ago, equal to 23% of the overall membership. Thirty-five members had joined over 40 years ago and we even had 14 members that joined in the Club's



first 10 years: 50 or more years ago. At the other end of the spectrum, the sustained recent growth has resulted in a large proportion of the Club's membership being relatively new: by early this year, 48% had been members for five or fewer years and 63% had been members for 10 years or fewer.

## CBC's face: The Club logo

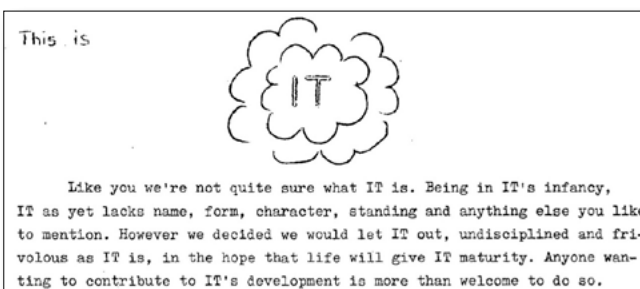


The Canberra Bushwalking Club's logo features a Northern Corroboree Frog, a ground dwelling frog found only in sub-alpine areas of the Brindabella and Fiery Ranges of Namadgi National Park, Kosciuszko National Park and Buccleuch State Forest.

The idea of adopting it as the Club's logo was the brainchild of CBC member, Harry Black, who was a public relations manager for the CSIRO and the Club's President from 1964 to 1965. According to former Club President and CBC Life Member, Doug Wright, Harry sold the idea of the frog on the fact it is one of the few frogs that walk, not hop (and, therefore, was in keeping with the Club's bushwalking focus).

The logo was drawn by Club member, Eleanor Stodart, who had seen one at Sydney University. The logo was so successful that, in the 1990s, Canberra University College tried to also adopt it, and were met with a sharp rebuke from the Club. Sadly, the real Northern Corroboree Frog hasn't fared so well – it is currently listed as endangered with factors such as habitat destruction, feral animals and increased levels of ultraviolet radiation threatening its survival.

## CBC's voice: The CBC newsletter



Ever wondered why the Canberra Bushwalking Club's newsletter is called *it*? You wouldn't be the first.

Prior to 1966, the Club relied on notice boards of shops like Paddy Pallin to advertise its walks. In November 1965, with a membership of about 170, Walks Secretary, Miep Molijn, and President, Doug Wright, decided it was time for a Club newsletter.

Before publishing their first issue, Miep called Doug saying it needed a name. Lacking an agreed title, they gave it the name, *it*, as a temporary fix. It was a bit of a joke: the first edition even carried a headline, 'This is IT,' while the second edition's was, 'Here IT is again'. The problem was, the title stuck.

Alternatives were discussed and debated—like 'Corroboree', 'Yabba', 'Kungala', 'Yandiah' and 'Yowie'—but agreement couldn't be reached so *it* it stayed (there were even ballots on the matter at

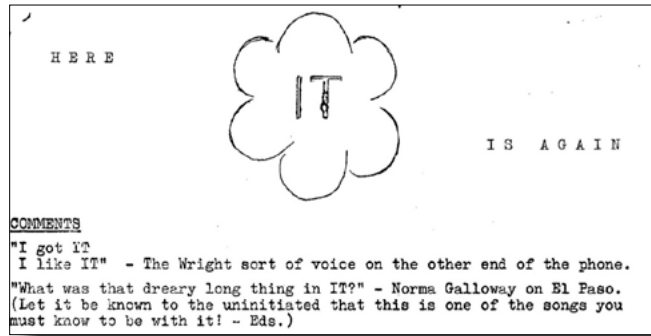






the May 1966 and February 1968 general meetings). Doug remembers the newsletter was originally produced on a copying machine in the Dutch embassy where Miep worked, and many a Club working bee was devoted to putting it together and sending it out.

Its first editors were Jennifer Brierley and Alice Eccles. Between December 1966 and October 1967, a monthly circular ran in parallel, listing the walks program and new members, but that publication was eventually incorporated into *it*. Like the Club's Northern Corroboree Frog logo, an attempt was made to lift the name in the 1990s—this



time by a computer company—only to be warned off by the Club.

## A memorable Club walk

Linda Groom (joined 1976)



My first walk with the CBC was in a summer in the late 1970s. It was to the Kowmung River in the southern Blue Mountains. I recall Sue and Alan Vidler and Rene Lays were on that trip, among others, and would later become my regular walking companions.

As we strode down a steep slope to the river, I was nervous. The weather was hot enough to make a swim almost inevitable. I had heard all CBC members skinny-dipped. I had never swum nude before but felt that wearing what we Queenslanders called 'bathers' would mark me as a hick from the state that had banned the musical *Hair*.

As it happened, I was the first to reach the water. I decided it was best not to hesitate. I tore off my clothes and was in the water before most of the others had caught up. Soon everyone was swimming, *au natural*. Swimming in the Kowmung was too joyous a thing to leave any room for embarrassment.

Later on that trip, I was introduced to another change that seemed necessary for a newbie to fit in. My Bushells tea with condensed milk was treated with jovial scorn. It had to be Twinings, without milk or sugar. I learnt quickly, because I was as in love with bushwalking then as I am now. And so began my many decades of CBC membership.



## Memories of long, rough and 'Tiger' club walks

*David Drohan (joined 1985 – an old Tiger walker with very faded stripes)*



The Club has a proud history of tough men and women who have completed hard walks, known in the early days as 'hard to severe', now known as 'long/rough'. A review of Club programs shows the following approximate number of such walks:

Decade	Long/rough overnight or multi-day	Long/rough day walks
1960s	32	7
1970s	88	25
1980s	80	8
1990s	47	21
2000s	44	66
2010s	32	170

The 1960s was the decade of exploring wild areas south of Canberra, especially the Woila region, in Deua National Park, with multi-day walks. The 1970s was the golden age for long/rough multi-day walks, but, from then on, these walks have been in decline. Nowadays, the majority of these trips are day walks, especially the tough Tuesday walks.

Over the decades, a few really tough Tiger walks have been recorded: the Woila circuit (in Deua National Park), the ACT six peaks and the Blue Mountains three peaks (all completed in under 48 hours).

### Memories of Club walks

*Cynthia Breheny (joined 1969)*

Easter 1967 and I went on my first overnight bushwalk: in Tasmania with wilderness photographer, Peter Dombrovskis, and his mother. I am shown in the accompanying photo after that walk. I was accepted as a member of CBC before moving to Canberra in 1969. To book on a walk at the time you signed in at Paddy Pallins shop and expected to be collected from home. Each single skinned A-shaped tent (do not touch!) was supported by a couple of sticks from the bush and was lined with bracken to sleep on. Meals were cooked over a fire: the happy focal point of every camp.



### A memorable Club walk

*Roger Edwards (joined 1986)*

My first CBC trip was planned for a creek in the Morton National Park in 1986. Registration for the walk required going to Braddon to write your name on a booking sheet at the back of the Paddy Pallins shop. Free and adequate parking was available near the shop. I did not end up going on that walk as the booking sheet was already full. I eventually went on my first Club trip, in the winter of 1986, to Cotter Rocks in Namadgi National Park. The ability to now book on a Club trip from the comfort of the lounge via your computer is a significant improvement.





# Part 4: Reflections from the past..

## Observations from a CBC committee devotee

*Lorraine Tomlins (joined 1978)*



Firstly, I'll give some context for my observations. I started bushwalking at 18 at university in Melbourne, and after moving to Canberra I joined the Club in the late 1970s. I was Club Secretary for a year, I think. In the 2000s, I was Walks Secretary and then President, holding each position for two years.

So, what changes have stood out to me over my years in the Club?

What has been great is how adaptable the Club has been in reflecting and incorporating evolving societal values as well as new technologies. For instance, in the beginning, no mixed-sex tenting was seen. Then, as the 'swinging 60s' took hold, this practice was no longer frowned upon. Now shared tenting on weekend walks is not a 'thing' anymore as new technologies have produced lighter tents meaning most walkers use a single-person one now.

A way to get around the weight issue of old-fashioned tents was using 'flies' alone, now widely known as 'tarps'. So, when I first joined, I was inducted into the use of flies and used them on weekend walks but then had to negotiate a shared tent for longer walks. As someone from Melbourne, the use of flies was eye-opening.

The other walking technology promoted by Club walkers was sandals (Volleys). These were almost unheard of where I had come from and reflected the number of Sydney refugees that

populated the Club at the time, as well as Volleys usefulness for sandstone and creek walking. Now, with gear developments, there is a greater choice of footwear and the old binary of boots-versus-sandshoes no longer creates heated arguments.

Another aspect of Club walking that has changed, possibly due to easy availability of smartphone cameras, is the modesty that is adopted when swimming. In the olden days, most walkers would swim without a costume and I have been on at least one walk in Ettrema Gorge in Morton National Park where packs, sandals, and, possibly a sunhat, were the only attire. We were obviously young and not so concerned about skin cancer.

My final observation is about leaders and the pressure many feel to have reconnoitred a walk before they offer it as an activity. The Club doesn't require this and I can't say why this is happening.



However, there do seem to be fewer exploratory walks on the program. There is a lot to be said for sharing the exploration of an area with others up for the challenge.

## Impressions from a former Walks Secretary

*Rob Horsfield (joined 1991)*



Prior to 2001, the main task of the Club Walks Secretary was to establish and maintain an attractive walks program for weekends in a coming month. There were a lot of well-established walks and good leaders. Mid-week walks were viewed as incidental but became increasingly popular; more people seemed to be retiring and Wednesday walks became a routine fixture. Not only was the program extended to cover every day of the week, leaders also covered a larger range of walking destinations.

Stan Marks specialised in local rambles to all sorts of places and encouraged many to join the Club. John Evans, Max Smith and Ian Wright created Tuesday walks, usually quite demanding and into parts unknown. It was said that Ian studied Google

Earth looking for granite outcrops with potential. One he visited he named 'The Temple of Doom'.

Good 4WDs and improved road access enabled trips further afield. An established weekend trip like the Corang Peak/Lagoon circuit in the Budawangs, in Morton National Park, was often done in a day. The monthly program had to be more flexible: short-notice trips were a welcome innovation and the fixed weekend schedule evolved to its present dynamic, online presence.

On average, there were 40–50 leaders in the year, running day, weekend or extended trips. Meg McKone's visits to Central Australia or the Kowmung River in the Blue Mountains were always popular. Linda Groom and Peter Conroy's walks to say, Kakadu and South America, were always booked out. The many Club leaders ran between 200 and 300 trips each year. I've always admired the amount of activity in the Club and through it have met a lot of people I would probably not have known otherwise.



## Memories of Club walks

*Paul Sheils (joined 1983)*

I joined the Club in February 1983 when stubbies and Volley sandshoes were common bushwalking attire. Memorable Club walks for me: anything in the Budawangs was an adventure; the hardest walk I led was Hannels Spur on the western side of the Kosciuszko main range, assisted by Ventolin (luckily I had finally worked out I had chronic asthma).

The most tiring and remotest feeling walk was Badja–Woila Circuit at Jillicambra, in the southern end of Deua National Park, where I remember lots of loose, dangerous rocks in gullies and on slopes. I also had some enjoyable cross-country ski trips in Kosciuszko.



Rejoining after a 30 year absence, it is day walks occasionally now for me but I still miss the adventure of full-pack weekend walks.





## Forty-seven years in CBC

*Meg McKone (joined 1973)*

Looking back on my time in the Club, I can see the influence of changes in society, the environment and individual Club members. When my husband Frank and I moved to Canberra with our two young children and immediately joined the Club at the end of 1973, many of the older, even original, members were still around doing impressive walks, while newer, younger walkers were making the most of their youthful energy and the wonderful bushwalking areas around Canberra.

Walks that were programmed medium/rough often turned into long/rough and I'd arrive home exhausted after covering many miles (as they were then) panting along in the rear. But we still had time to boil the billy (on a fire – no one carried stoves) for morning tea and lunch. We would wake to the sound of sticks being broken for an early cuppa, the leader's aim being to get us out of bed: 'fluid drive' it was called.

One of the hardest weekend trips I did with the Club was Vengeance Peninsula from Kanangra Walls and return in the southern Blue Mountains with Terry Jordan, Bob Harrison and Gary Medaris: my introduction to the wonderful Blue Breaks area, where I've returned many times since.

River trips were very popular in summer with extended walks down Ettrema and Wadbilliga Creeks in Morton National Park, and the Genoa, Deua, Tuross and Brogo Rivers in south-east New South Wales. Skinny dipping (occasionally accompanied by snakes) was the order of the day – we didn't have time to change in and out of wet swimmers. The Club was into doing long/rough day walks too, a popular one being Mt Namadgi from the Orroral Valley in a day in Namadgi National Park. Then Alan Vidler and party, having reached Mt Namadgi quite early, decided to continue on to Mt Kelly, and Kelly-in-a-day was born.



Canyoning was very popular in the 1980s and 1990s. We would drive up to the Blue Mountains on a Friday night and do either one canyon per day, or sometimes multiple canyons with overnight packs. Alas, with changes to insurance policies in the 2000s, we were not able to put these trips on the program for many years. Some popular areas have become inaccessible due to access problems (the Deua, and recently Corang Lagoon in Morton



National Park) or the growth of horrendous scrub (parts of the Budawangs and Namadgi). The recent fires have changed that – for a while! And now we have the threat of walking tracks being closed to the general public due to private developments in national parks.

Around the turn of the century, weekends and holidays spent staying in lodges to do day walks became popular and there were difficulties persuading new members to try the delights of camping out in the bush far away from home comforts.

Recently, advertising our program online has made an enormous difference to the make-up of the membership, with an influx of younger members keen to try out all kinds of walks and master their navigational devices, along with older members retiring and making the most of their extra time.

With a huge variety of day, overnight and longer trips available, ranging from easy to hard, old favourites to exploratory trips (Linda Groom has shown how many new areas can be explored within a few hours of Canberra), the Club is in a very healthy space.

## Reflections from a long-term Membership Secretary

*Roger Edwards (joined 1986)*



In 1992, I became the Club Membership Secretary and continued in the role for 20 years, with a couple of short breaks while acting in other committee positions (sometimes in addition to being Membership Secretary).

In 1992, CBC used a software package for memberships developed by life member, Alan Vidler, using dBaseII. The software served the Club well until the turn of century when changes in the Club's requirements required an updated system. These included accepting payment by

credit card and lower membership fees for those receiving electronic copies of the Club newsletter. I fondly remember my monthly battle to get the dot matrix printer to line up when printing address labels. Eventually, labels for the printer were no longer procurable.

In about 2010, a new membership system was developed by David Briese that made the Membership Secretary's job a lot easier. This system was superseded in 2017 by one developed by Zealous. The Zealous system supported the on-line booking of walks. Unfortunately for me, shortly after it was introduced, I was unable to access emails on my computer for four weeks and had to process all membership matters, and learn the new system, on a smartphone. This was to be my last year as Membership Secretary: I decided to relinquish the role to someone more technically orientated.

I was also the CBC Publisher for a couple of years collecting the printed magazine from the printers and arranging for it to be folded and posted the next day. This would take about two hours with several Club members meeting at someone's house once a month. With the advent of electronic newsletters, the number of copies diminished and it became more practical for me (and often assisted by my wife, kids and Stan Marks) to do it at home.

### A memorable Club walk

*Cynthia Breheny (joined 1969)*

Lesley Band (née Howlett) and I joined an overnight Club walk to the magnificent Ettrema Gorge in Morton National Park in 1970. We descended with some difficulty as our overnight packs seemed far too heavy. Way ahead, however, our leader strode effortlessly through the bush. When we settled by the river, we were astonished to see him extract an enormous tome from his pack: Gowers Plain Words. We were then flabbergasted by his explanation: he had brought it to please his boss who said he was too much



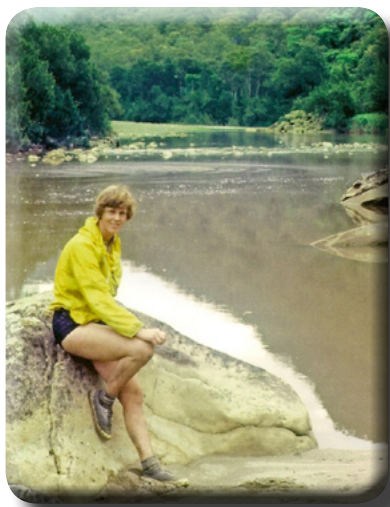
of an obscurantist (because he used words most would not know the meaning of).





## A memorable Club walk

*Barbara Slotemaker de Bruine (joined 1968)*



I fondly remember a walk I did with the Club to the Budawangs in the late 1960s. I think Bob Story was the leader. It was on that trip that I met Jenny Horsfield, a well known Club member, and we became lifelong friends.

I distinctly remember being up high near some caves and looking down over the plains. It was like being in Africa. There was a storm brewing in the west and the dense, dark clouds contrasted with the sun that was trying to set. I think I was carrying an old wooden A-frame pack with a Japara tent and was wearing a Gortex jacket, not the luxury gear of today's backpackers!

Another fond memory occurred in the days when you were allowed to camp in Monolith Valley in the Budawangs. Sue Vidler (another long-standing member) was in the group: she led us in singing in harmony and the sounds reverberated around the clifftops. Special times!

## A memorable Club walk

*Di Thompson (joined 1968)*

A walk to the Naas Valley and Boboyan Homestead on 9 March 1969 was my first with the Club; these areas later became part of Namadgi National Park. Most people in those days wore Volleys or Dunlop sports shoes and drove VW Beetles.

The party strode off down the Naas Valley and, on the way out, stopped at the Boboyan Homestead. There, my husband trod on a nail that went through his shoe and into his foot so we made a hasty retreat in our 1967 Beetle for Queanbeyan Hospital and a tetanus injection.



## A memorable Club walk

*Ian Hickson (joined 1982)*

This photo was taken by Keith Thomas of me sheltering in some *Scoparia* on the side of Eldon Peak in western Tasmania for lunch on a Club walk in 2011. We walked from near Mt Tyndall (north of Queenstown) through the Eldon Range to Lake St Clair (mostly through the southwest part of the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park). I particularly enjoyed the wilderness feeling of finding our way off-track for 12 days and the wonderful mountain scenery.

I have been a member for 40 years and the Club has had what I regard as highs and lows in that time. At the moment I think that it is on a high with many active members who enjoy the wilderness experience.



